EXCISE

(4)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

BRIEFING PAPER

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Afghanistan and Pakistan

The Soviet invasion and continuing occupation of Afghanistan have had a profound effect on regional nations -- particularly Pakistan -- and on our interests in regional security. Previously we saw this area as an important but not vital area somewhat removed from direct super power confrontation. The Soviet thrust has changed this situation. The President's State of the Union address in January signalled a strong US commitment to the security and stability of this region, and we have taken a number of steps to bolster our presence in the area and to reassure countries such as Pakistan of our commitment to their territorial integrity.

Afghanistan: The Soviets are probably in Afghanistan for an extended stay. Their immediate goals are to pacify the countryside and to secure a stable and compliant regime in Kabul. The resistance movement will probably continue tying up some 85,000 or more Soviet troops but the rebels are fragmented, lack effective national leadership, and certainly cannot force a Soviet withdrawal.

We and our allies have limited our contacts with the Afghan regime and have avoided actions which imply recognition. We still maintain a seventeen person embassy in Kabul under a charge

[redacted]

B1, A5

Our Embassy's activities, however, are severely circumscribed by security conditions and Afghan Government restrictions.

With strong Soviet support, the Government controls Kabul, but not the countryside.

[redacted]

B1, A5

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

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EXCISE

There are three main issues which are likely to come up in the near future concerning Afghanistan.

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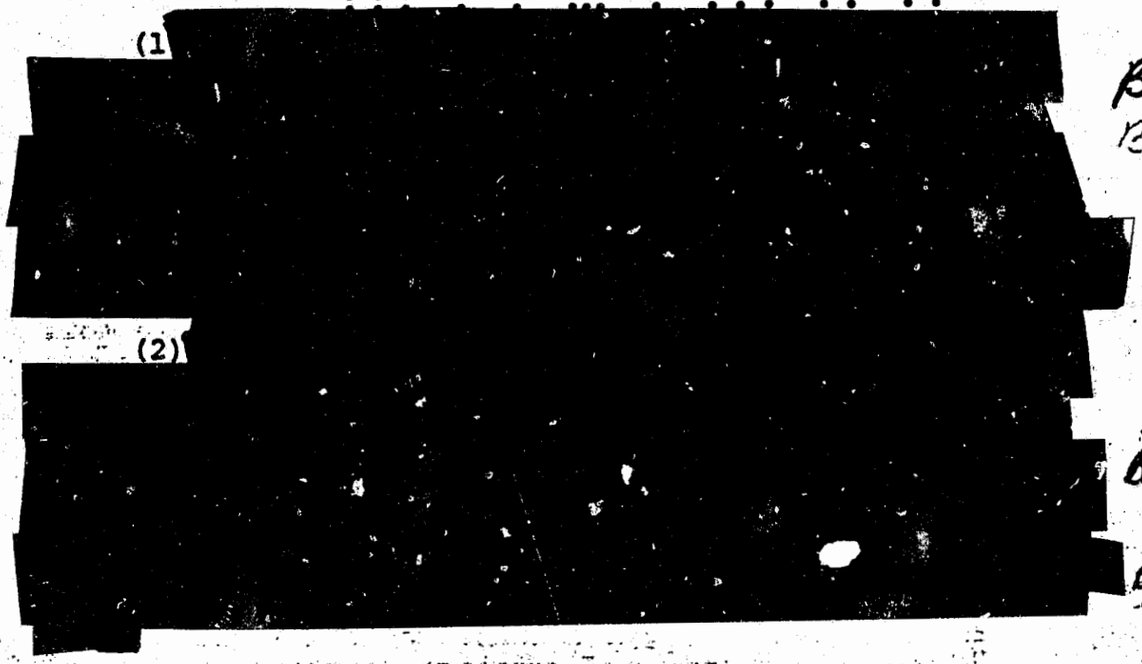

B1, A5
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(2)

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(3) Finally there is the question of how to deal with various proposals concerning neutrality for Afghanistan. In an effort to encourage a political solution to the crisis, the EC-9 have floated the idea of guaranteed neutrality for Afghanistan conditioned on a complete Soviet withdrawal. Moscow and Kabul are urging regional talks which would involve international recognition of the Soviet fait accompli. These proposals will probably be discussed at the upcoming NATO meeting and at the Islamic Foreign Minister's Conference in Islamabad in mid-May.

Pakistan: Among all the countries in the region, Pakistan was the most directly affected by the Soviet invasion. In mid-December the Zia Government was facing mounting opposition, but the invasion seemed to give the regime a new lease on life and defused opposition from within the military and from the conservative right. In January and February there was a sense of crisis in Pakistan and fear that the Soviets would engage in hot pursuit raids across the border and mount subversive activities in the disaffected Pakistani province of Baluchistan. That sense of crisis has subsided. To many Pakistanis the Soviet occupation now seems a fact of life and the feared hot pursuit raids have not taken place.